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ABSTRACT

This report reviews and analyzes data and issues affecting the supply and demand for teachers in urban public schools for the past, present, and future. The demography of urban teachers does not match that of students. While students of color made up 74.7 percent of all students in the Great City Schools, teachers of color were only 37.9 percent of the total in 1990. Current trends suggest that the supply and diversity of urban teachers is threatened. The interest of youth of color in education has declined, as evidenced by a drop of 56 percent from 1976 to 1989 in the number of bachelor's degrees awarded in education to people of color. In 1990-91, central-city public schools had much more difficulty in filling their teacher vacancies than did suburban and large-town schools. In addition, the gap between higher teacher pay in cities and nationally has lessened, meaning that there is less financial incentive to choose urban schools in which to teach. At present, people of color are not well represented in the public school teaching force, and nothing suggests that the trend will be reversed. A multiethnic teaching force brings benefits to minority-group children and also can help break the cultural isolation of many students of the dominant culture. Nine graphs present data on teacher supply and demand. (Contains 13 references.) (SLD)

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Council of the Great City Schools

urban Indicator

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Diversifying Our Great City School Teachers: Twenty Year Trends

Students attending our nation's urban schools today are largely people of color, many from low income families, with limited English proficiency and recent immigrants. Yet the teaching force in the urban schools does not reflect the same diversity.

If the urban students of today are to lead the society of tomorrow, every effort must be made to convey to them that people of color are successful and contributing members of society. A diverse teaching force in urban schools can serve as mentors, provide strong role models, and spur their students with similar styles of learning and community.

This report reviews and analyzes data and issues affecting the supply and demand for teachers in urban public schools—past, present and future. Who are the students and teachers; does the teaching force adequately reflect the student body; and has there been any progress over the last 20 years? What are the current working conditions for teachers in the schools? Is there a shortage of teachers in urban school districts? What are the prospects for improvement in the future? Are people of color going to college? If so, are they majoring in education? Are college graduates of color earning their degrees in education? What does the pipeline look like for the urban school teaching force? What are the implications for educating students in the Great Cities and who will be the teachers?

Highlights

- The demography of urban teachers does not match that of urban students. In 1990, teachers of color in the Council of Great City Schools (GCS) comprised 37.9 percent of full-time teachers while students of color made up 74.7 percent of all GCS students.
- During the period 1970 to 1990, the share of the nation's teachers of color employed in GCS declined from 31.2 percent to 26.5 percent.
- Some 21.9 percent of all GCS teachers were individuals of color in 1970, and 37.9 percent were in 1990.
- If current trends continue, then the diversity and supply of teachers in the GCS is further threatened.

—In 1990, almost one-quarter of central city public schools had teaching vacancies that were impossible to fill, particularly for bilingual education teachers.

—Today, interest among youth of color in education has declined. From 1976 to 1989 the number of bachelor's degrees awarded in education to people of color plummeted by 56 percent.

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Who Are The Students?

National

The demographic shifts in the population during the 1970's and 1980's mirror changes in the nation's public school enrollment.

- In 1970, students of color comprised 21 percent of public school enrollments, by 1990 they made up 31 percent of the national student body (OCR, 1970 & NCES, 1993).

In 1990, the racial/ethnic distribution of students enrolled in public schools nationally stood at:

- 68.6 percent Anglo;
- 16.1 percent African American;
- 11.1 percent Hispanic;
- 2.9 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; and
- 1.3 percent Native American and other (NCES, 1993).

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Great City Schools

Students of color are more likely to attend Great City Schools (GCS) than public schools overall. The racial and ethnic composition in the Great City Schools changed considerably over the last twenty years.

- During the period 1970 to 1990[1], the number of Anglo students enrolled in GCS declined by 62.7 percent; by contrast, the number of Hispanics attending GCS increased 89.6 percent and Asian American enrollments tripled over this time (Council of the Great City Schools, 1993).

In 1990[2] the racial/ethnic distribution of students enrolled in the GCS was:

- 23.5 percent were Anglo;
- 42.1 percent African American;
- 27.7 percent Hispanic;
- 6.0 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; and
- 0.5 percent Native American and other.

Who Are The Teachers?

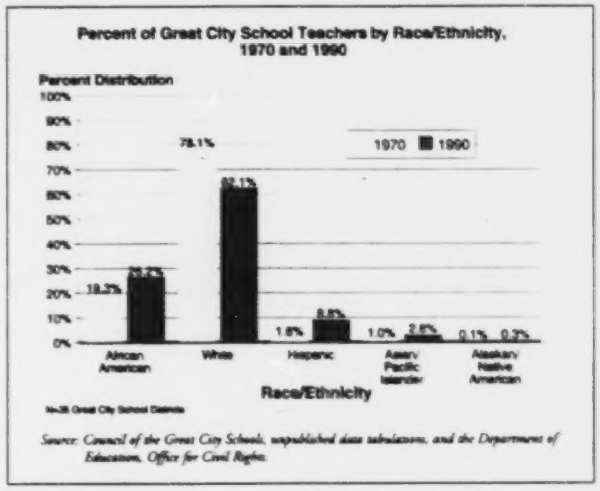
National

- Between 1970 and 1990 the share of all teaching positions nationally held by people of color increased slightly from 10.8 percent to 13.5 percent (OCR, 1970 and NCES, 1993).
- Between 1970 and 1990 the share of the nation's public school teaching positions held by African Americans declined from 9.4 percent to 8.3 percent; Anglos decreased from 89.2 percent to 86.5 percent; Hispanics were up from 1.0 percent to 3.4 percent; Asian/Pacific Islanders increased from 0.3 percent to 1.0 percent; and Native Americans held steady at less than 1.0 percent.
- In 1990-91, almost three-quarters (71.9 percent) of the nation's public school teachers were women and 28.1 percent were male.

Great City Schools

- From 1970 to 1990, the share of all full-time teaching positions held by people of color in GCS increased from 21.9 percent to 37.9 percent.
- Between 1970 and 1990, the share of full-time teaching positions held by African Americans in GCS increased from 19.3 percent to 26.2 percent; and Hispanics increased from 1.6 percent to 8.8 percent during this period. Anglos experienced a decline in their share of full-time teaching positions in GCS, from 78.1 percent in 1970 to 62.1 percent in 1990. [☞ *Chart 1*]

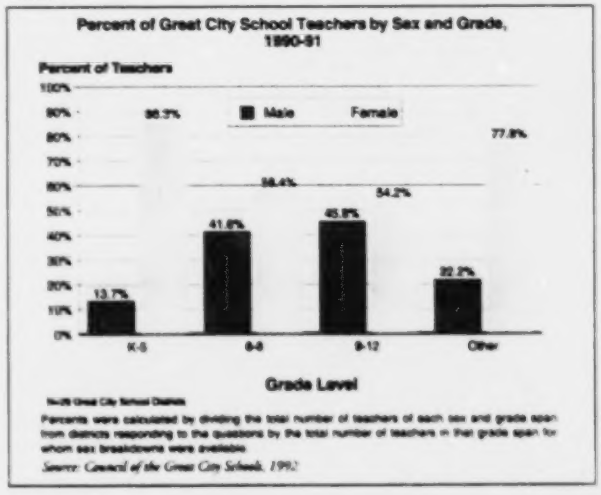
Chart 1



Source: Council of the Great City Schools, unpublished data tabulations, and the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

- From 1970 to 1990, the share of the nation's teaching positions held by people of color in the GCS declined. In 1970, GCS employed 31.2 percent of all the nation's teachers of color; by 1990 they employed an estimated 26.5 percent (OCR, 1970 & NCES, 1993).
- In 1990-91, 13.7 percent of GCS teachers in grades K-5 were male and 86.3 percent were female. [☞ *Chart 2*]

Chart 2



Source: Council of the Great City Schools, 1992

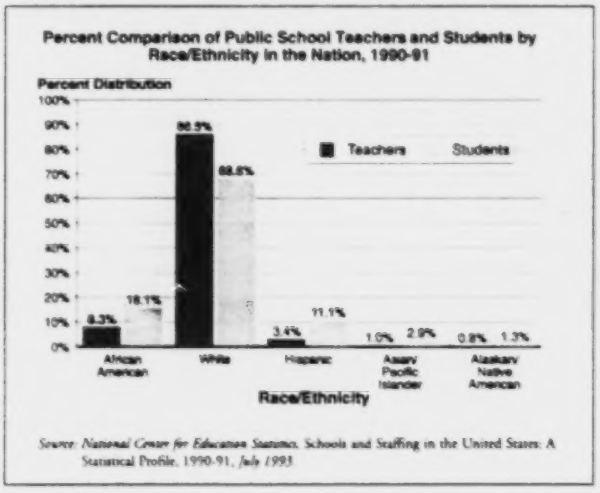
Student/Teacher Ratio

Much of the discussion on diversifying the teaching force in public school systems revolves around issues of racial parity and sensitivity. Key questions include who teaches, how does the teaching force reflect the diversity in the student body, and does it matter?

National

- In 1990, people of color comprised only 13.5 percent of the nation's public school teaching force but 31.4 percent of the students. (NCES, 1993)
- Nationally, Anglos represent 86.5 percent of public school teachers and 68.6 percent of students. [☞ *Chart 3*]

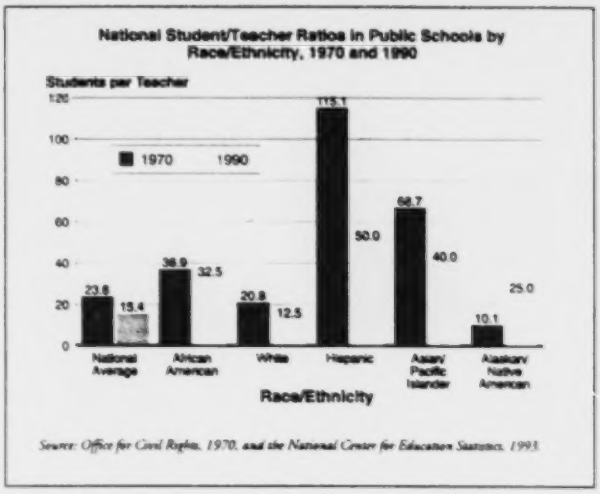
Chart 3



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1990-91, July 1993.

- In comparison, African American teachers comprised only 8.3 percent of the teachers but 16.1 percent of the students.
- Overall, the national average student/teacher ratio improved during 1970 to 1990, from about 24 students for every teacher in 1970 to 15 students for every teacher by 1990. [☞ *Chart 4*]
- However, the improvement in the student/teacher ratio nationally varied by race/ethnicity. For example, in 1970, there were about 21 Anglo students to every Anglo teacher; by 1990 there were approximately 13 Anglo students for every Anglo teacher.
- For every African American teacher nationally in 1970 there were about 37 African American students; twenty years later there was a slight improvement with about 33 African American students for every African American teacher.

Chart 4

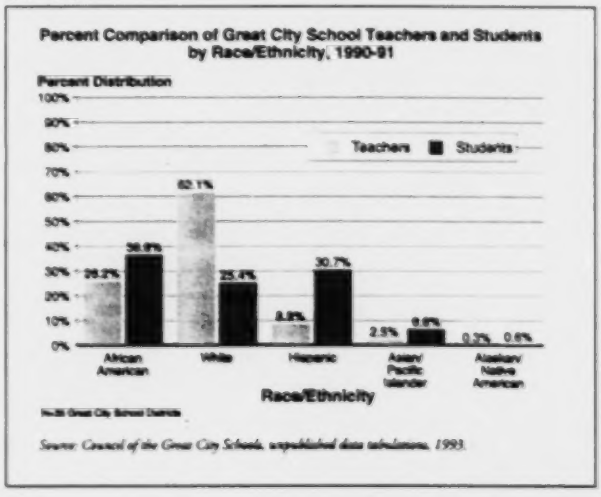


Source: Office for Civil Rights, 1970, and the National Center for Education Statistics, 1993.

Great City Schools

- Overall, teachers of color comprised 37.9 percent of full-time teachers in GCS in 1990-91; however, students of color make up 74.7[3] percent of all GCS students.
- For example, in 1990, Anglos represented 62.1 percent of teachers in GCS but only 25.4 percent of the students; in comparison, Hispanic teachers comprised 8.8 percent of the teaching force in GCS and 30.7 percent of the students. [☞ *Chart 5*]

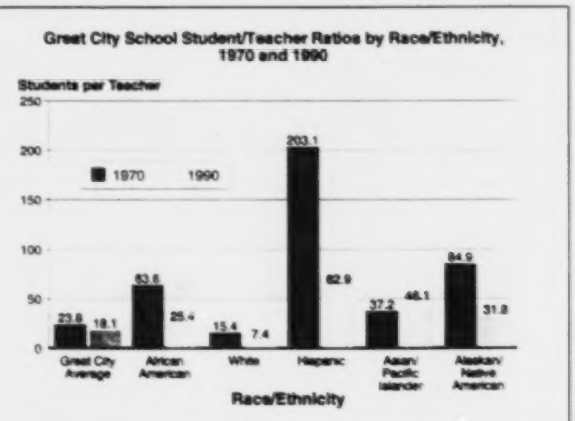
Chart 5



Source: Council of the Great City Schools, unpublished data tabulations, 1993.

- Generally, the pupil/teacher ratios in GCS improved during the twenty year period 1970 to 1990, but not as fast as the national averages. In 1970, there were 24 students for every teacher, by 1990 the ratio stood at 18 students to every teacher, including special education and other teachers who work in small classes. [☞ *Chart 6*]

Chart 6



Source: Council of the Great City Schools, unpublished data tabulations, 1993, and U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

- The greatest gain in student/teacher ratios was among Hispanics; in 1970, there was one Hispanic teacher for every 203 Hispanic students; by 1990 there was one Hispanic teacher for every 63 Hispanic students. Despite the improvements, Hispanics had the highest student/teacher ratio of any racial/ethnic group.

- The student/teacher ratio improved for all racial/ethnic groups between 1970 to 1990, with the exception of Asian Americans. In 1970, for every Asian American teacher there were 37 Asian American students, by 1990 there were 46 Asian American students for every Asian American teacher.

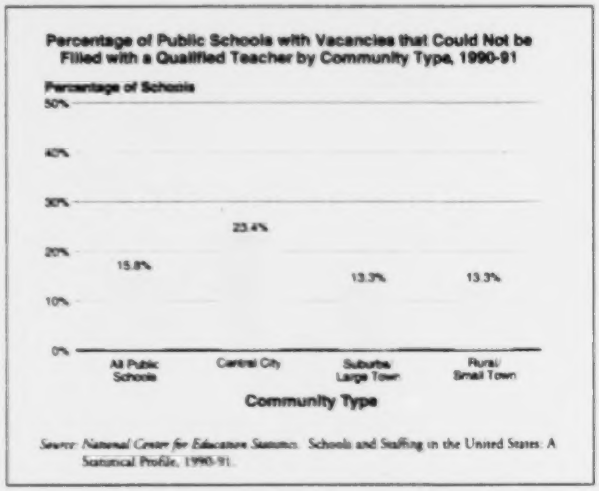
Teacher Supply, Demand & Shortages

- In 1990-91, on average, public school districts nationally filled nearly all of their teaching positions (99.4 percent) (NCES, 1993).

- However, 15.8 percent of public schools nationally experienced difficulty in filling teacher vacancies with qualified teachers the same year.

- This difficulty was truer for central city public schools where almost one-quarter (23.4 percent) had teacher vacancies they could not fill; in comparison, 13.3 percent of public schools in the suburbs/large towns had this problem. [☞ *Chart 7*]

Chart 7

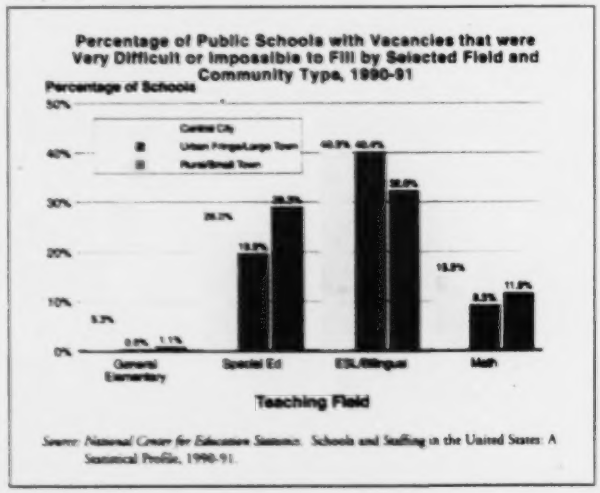


Source: National Center for Education Statistics. Schools and Staffing in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1990-91.

Among those schools nationally with teaching vacancies in 1990-91, the difficulty in filling the vacancies varied by field and community type.

- For example, almost equal percentages of public schools in central cities (40.5) and the suburbs/large towns (40.4 percent) found it very difficult or impossible to fill vacancies for teachers in ESL or bilingual education in comparison to 32.6 percent of their counterparts in rural/small towns. [☞ *Chart 8*]

Chart 8



Source: National Center for Education Statistics. Schools and Staffing in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1990-91.

Teaching Conditions

Time Spent Teaching

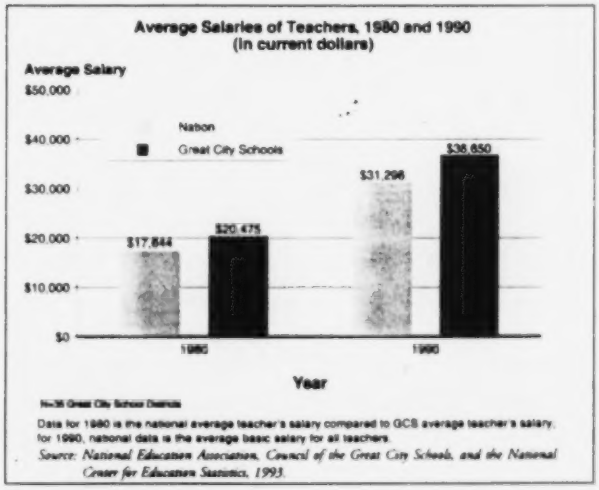
- In 1990, the average public school teacher nationally was required to spend 35.3 hours per week at school; in addition, they spent 3.2 hours per week in activities with students and 7.9 hours per week in activities without students (NCES, 1993).
- This pattern was similar for public school teachers in the central cities, who were required to spend 34.8 hours per week at school, 2.9 average hours per week in activities with students and 7.9 hours per week in activities without students (NCES, 1993).

Salaries

National

- In 1990, the average basic salary for full-time public school teachers nationally stood at $31,296 (in current dollars). This is up from 1980, when the average salary stood at $17,644 (in current dollars). [☞ *Chart 9*]

Chart 9



Data for 1980 is the national average teacher's salary compared to GCS average teacher's salary. for 1990, national data is the average basic salary for all teachers.

Source: National Education Association, Council of the Great City Schools, and the National Center for Education Statistics, 1993.

Great City Schools

- In 1990, the average salary for teachers in the GCS stood at $36,650 (in current dollars), compared to $20,475 in 1980 (in current dollars).
- The gap between the higher teacher pay in cities and nationally closed by 31.7 percent between 1980 and 1990, meaning that there is now less financial incentive for teachers to choose urban schools in which to teach.

Teacher Education: The Next Generation

The data suggest that people of color are not now well represented in the public school teaching force. What does the future look like?

Enrollment in Schools of Education

- From fall 1987 to fall 1989, enrollment nationally in schools, colleges and departments of education (SCDE) rose by 14 percent (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education {AACTE}, 1990 b).
- In fall 1989, approximately 11 percent of students enrolled in SCDE's were people of color.
- The racial/ethnic composition of SCDE enrollment in 1989 was: 86.5 percent Anglos; 6.8 percent African American; 2.7 percent Hispanic; 0.9 percent Asian/ Pacific Islander and 0.5 percent American Indian/ Alaskan Native and 2.7 percent other.
- In 1989, most teacher education students were pursuing degrees in elementary education (44 percent) followed by 32 percent in secondary education and 8 percent enrolled in early childhood education.
- Further in 1989, the majority (90 percent) of undergraduates enrolled in elementary education were Anglo, while only 5.0 percent were African American and 2.6 percent were Hispanic.
- This racial/ethnic pattern was also true in undergraduate enrollments in secondary education.
- However, the most likely field among African American teacher education enrollees in 1989 was vocational education (15.3 percent) while over half (52.3 percent) of Hispanics majored in bilingual education.

Earned Degrees in Education

- In 1989, a total of 96,988 bachelor's degrees were awarded in education by colleges and universities; people of color earned 8.4 percent of all these degrees (Carter and Wilson, 1992).
- Generally, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded in education between 1976 and 1989 declined by 37.3 percent; however, for people of color the decline was sharper (55.9 percent).

There are several reasons why the number of people of color pursuing the teaching profession has declined: teacher entry and exit certification tests (Demauro, 1989); migration of actual and potential teachers to other disciplines and professions (Darling-Hammond, Johnson-Pittman and Ottinger, 1987); aging minority teaching population (Garibaldi, 1987); and low teacher status and salaries (Feistritzer, 1989).

- Almost three-quarters of African American teacher education students cited low salaries as a reason for not entering the profession in 1990, as did 62 percent of Hispanics, 53 percent of Asians and 44 percent of Anglos (AACTE, 1990a).
- Another reason cited by prospective minority teachers more so than their Anglo peers was discipline problems. In 1990, 53 percent of African American teacher education students noted that discipline problems was a reason for not entering teaching, compared to 23 percent of Anglos.

Implications

Students of color and language minorities are a growing presence in our nation and in urban schools. Yet the urban teaching force is not nearly as diverse as its students. For example, there were 91,698 teachers of color in the GCS in 1990. This is equal to 37.9 percent of the total teaching force. However, if the share of teachers of color were equal to the share of students of color, then a total of 184,622 teachers of color would have taught in urban schools in that year.

These numbers are even more imbalanced considering that only 8,870 bachelor's degrees in education were awarded to people of color in 1989. These calculations illustrate that the demand far outweighs supply. Given that the number of students of color will increase over the next years, the demographic imbalance in our teaching force will become even more severe.

This is not to say that only teachers of color can teach these students but it is extremely important that these children see people of color in positions of authority who may serve as role models.

Second, because teachers of color and their students may have similar communication and learning styles, teachers can enhance the cognitive and academic achievement of their students. Further, a diverse teaching force may assist in bridging the social and cultural gap that may exist between home and school; they can also serve as links for achieving understanding of and appreciation for cultural differences. As noted by Irvine (1990) "they must serve as 'cultural translators' in order that children learn to function effectively in an increasingly diverse America."

Finally, to give all children a quality education it is imperative that students be exposed to a variety of cultural perspectives that are representative of a culturally diverse nation. A multicultural curriculum would reach it's greatest potential with a multicultural teaching force. This teaching force could benefit not only children of color but also would play a role in breaking the cultural isolation that many Anglo students face.

A key issue affecting the pipeline for teachers is that many students of color are enrolled in two-year institutions and very few transfer into four-year colleges and universities. For example, between 1988 and 1990, the number of Hispanic students enrolled in college increased 11.5 percent; but in 1990, more than half (54.6 percent) of Hispanics enrolled attended two-year institutions (Carter and Wilson, 1992).

One of the long term strategies for addressing the issue of diversifying the teaching force in urban schools, of course, is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn and succeed. Every effort needs to be made so that all children can be contributing members of society—whether or not they become teachers.

Notes

[1]This enrollment data is based on the Council of Great City Schools universe (n=47 school districts).

[2]Ibid.

[3]The teacher and enrollment data cited are based on responses from 35 school districts from the Council of the Great City Schools membership and differs from data cited earlier in this report.

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Key Facts

- ✓ In 1990-91, teachers in the average Great City School (GCS) district were on duty 187.4 days.
- ✓ In 1990-91, 24.6 percent of GCS teachers[1] in grades K-5 were African American, 61.0 percent were Anglo, 2.5 percent were Hispanic and 11.8 percent were Asian American.
- ✓ 24.8 percent of GCS teachers in grades 6-8 were African American, 63.3 percent were Anglo, 3.3 percent were Hispanic, and 8.2 percent were Asian American.
- ✓ In grades 9-12 the racial/ethnic distribution of teachers was 19.7 percent African American, 71.1 percent were Anglo, 1.8 percent were Hispanic, and 7.0 percent were Asian American.
- ✓ In 1990-91, the majority (98.6 percent) of GCS secondary English teachers were fully certified to teach; as were 96.9 percent of Math teachers and 97.3 percent of Science teachers.
- ✓ More than three-quarters (77.8 percent) of GCS districts had future teacher programs at some of their schools in 1990-91.
- ✓ In 1990-91, 95.5 percent of GCS systems provided some form of in-service training program in urban culture or race relations in at least some schools.

[1]N=28 Great City School districts.

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